

Andalusia, The Graperies
(Nicholas Biddle Estate)
.3 mile south of State Road
Andalusia
Bensalem Township
Bucks County
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-1248-D

HABS
PA,
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HISTDRICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
REDUCED COPY OF MEASURED DRAWING

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

HABS
PA,
ANDALUSIA
ID-

ARCHITECTURAL DATA FORM

STATE PENNSYLVANIA	COUNTY BUCKS	TOWN OR VICINITY ANDALUSIA
HISTORIC NAME OF STRUCTURE (INCLUDE SOURCE FOR NAME) ANDALUSIA, THE GRAPERIES		HABS NO. PA-1248-D
SECONDARY OR COMMON NAMES OF STRUCTURE		
COMPLETE ADDRESS (DESCRIBE LOCATION FOR RURAL SITES) .3 mile south of State Road		
DATE OF CONSTRUCTION (INCLUDE SOURCE) 1834-1836; 1838	ARCHITECT(S) (INCLUDE SOURCE) Thomas U. Walter (1804-1887)	
SIGNIFICANCE (ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL, INCLUDE ORIGINAL USE OF STRUCTURE) The graperies attributed to Thomas U. Walter were one of the largest greenhouse-type structures of the time probably built in this country. (continued on p. 2)		
STYLE (IF APPROPRIATE)		
MATERIAL OF CONSTRUCTION (INCLUDE STRUCTURAL SYSTEMS) The graperies walls are rubble. A majority of the greenhouse portion were wood. The furnace houses are masonry with tin roofs.		
SHAPE AND DIMENSIONS OF STRUCTURE (SKETCHED FLOOR PLANS ON SEPARATE PAGES ARE ACCEPTABLE) The graperies walls are 280'-0" long. Dimensions are not available for other structures.		
EXTERIOR FEATURES OF NOTE The water tower chimney is brick with a corbeled belt around top. Chimneys on the furnace houses are no longer apparent. There were double doors into each of the graperies houses, but the marble threshold is still in place. Simple (see p. 2)		
INTERIOR FEATURES OF NOTE (DESCRIBE FLOOR PLANS, IF NOT SKETCHED)		
MAJOR ALTERATIONS AND ADDITIONS WITH DATES See Significance statement.		
PRESENT CONDITION AND USE The graperies walls are in good condition. The area enclosed by the graperies is now a boxwood garden.		
OTHER INFORMATION AS APPROPRIATE		
SOURCES OF INFORMATION (INCLUDING LISTING ON NATIONAL REGISTER, STATE REGISTERS, ETC.) Wainwright, Nicholas B. "Andalusia, Countryseat of the Craig Family and of Nicholas Biddle and His Descendants." The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Bibliography (No.1, 1977): 3-69.		
COMPILER, AFFILIATION Martin J. Rosenblum, HABS, 1974; Susan McCown, HABS, editor, 1983		DATE

SIGNIFICANCE (continued from p. 1):

The purpose of the graperies was indoor cultivation of grapes. In 1834 a glazed forcing house (a type of greenhouse) was built at a cost of approximately \$1,980.00. In 1835 and 1836 two huge graperies were built at a cost of \$21,807.00, which was higher than the cost of Walter's 1836-1838 improvements to the main house. Each grapery consisted of a long wall and a furnace, and at one end of the grapery walls were a water tower and a roofed structure. In 1838 an engine house was built to house steam engine, which pumped water up from the river to the water tower. Improvements were also made to the forcing houses in that year.

After Nicholas Biddle's death in 1844, his son, Craig, continued his father's cultivation of grapes. After 1871, the family discontinued that practice, following a storm which severely damaged the graperies. Today the grapery walls, the furnace houses and the ca. 1910 structures remain.

The original water tower was wood, and was burned ca. 1910 and replaced by a stone tower, a coach house and a stable house. The architects for the new structures were Mellor, Meigs and Howe of Philadelphia.

EXTERIOR FEATURES OF NOTE (continued from p. 1):

vertical board doors with horizontal battens are on each of the furnace houses. Wood shutters match doors on all furnace houses. Furnace house roofs are shed form. Some roofs are covered with standing seam tin; others are covered with slate. Simple single barge board trim is on each furnace house.